

REMARKS

Claims 1, 18 and 25 have been amended. Claims 26-29 have been added. Claims 1-3, 5, 7-8, 10 and 12-29 remain for further consideration. No new matter has been added.

The objection and rejections shall be taken up in the order presented in the Official Action.

1. The prior art rejection is noted.
2. Claim 5 has been amended to no longer depend from a cancelled claim.
3. Claim 18 has been amended to correct the informality.
4. Claim 25 has also been amended to correct the informality.
- 5-6. Claims 12-17 currently stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph for allegedly failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter deemed to be the present invention.

The first sound system input unit and the multimedia data generating units are separate elements of claim 12. It is respectfully submitted that the language set forth in claim 12 clearly indicates that these are separate claim elements. For example, claim 12 recites “...*a first sound system input unit, which cooperates with at least a second sound system input unit to control multimedia data generating units...*”. The method of claim 12 further recites “*sending a control signal containing a priority value from the first sound system input unit to the multimedia data generating units over the system bus*” (emphasis added). It is respectfully submitted that this

language clearly indicates a difference between the first sound system input unit and the multimedia data generating units.

7-8. Claims 18, 22-23 and 25 currently stand rejected for allegedly being anticipated by the subject matter disclosed in U.S. Patent 6,031,241 to Watanabe (hereinafter “Watanabe”).

Claim 18 recites a vehicle sound system that provides an audio signal to a speaker system.

The sound system includes:

“a first input unit that receives a first priority value indicative of a first scope of authority that said first input unit has been assigned over the vehicle sound system;
a second input unit that receives a second priority value indicative of a second scope of authority said second input unit has been assigned over said motor vehicle sound system;
a system bus; and
a plurality of sound system generating components each capable of communicating with said first and second input units over said system bus and being selectively controlled by said first and second input units via said system bus.” (cl. 18).

Watanabe fails to disclose (or even suggest) first and second input units as set forth in claim 18. The devices 1-1 to 1-n disclosed in Watanabe include “*a portable telephone, navigation system (NV), DVD (Digital Video Disc or Digital Virtual Disc) system, CD (Compact Disc) system, a sensor such as an azimuth sensor or car speed sensor, a monitor device, a audio speaker, etc.*”. Noticeably missing is any disclosure of first and second input units that control a plurality of sound system generating components. The Official Action contends that the plurality of devices 1-1 to 1-n reads in the first and second input units (see Official Action, pg. 3). However, this can not be correct since there is no disclosure in Watanabe that a first and a second of the plurality of devices 1-1 to 1-n controls other of the plurality of devices in Watanabe, as recited in claim 18 of the present application. Specifically, the system recited in claim 18 includes:

“a plurality of sound system generating components each capable of communicating with said first and second input units over said system bus and being selectively controlled by said first and second input units via said system bus.”

A fair and proper reading of Watanabe can not be construed as disclosing such a structure.

In addition, the system recited in claim 18 involves providing priority values to first and second input units that define the scope of authority each input unit (e.g., one accessible in the front seat and the other accessible in the back seat) has over the plurality of sound system generating components. In contrast, Watanabe discloses a system for assigning a priority for accessing a transmission medium – not the scope of authority for controlling a sound system generating component. That is, as shown in FIG. 1 of Watanabe, a *transmission* right assigning device 11 provides priority information to each of the devices 1-2 to 1-n for access to the transmission line 3 that each of the devices 1-1 to 1-n is connected and communicates over. Specifically, Watanabe makes it clear that the system disclosed therein controls access to the transmission medium (i.e., the bus) by stating “[t]he *transmission* right assigning device 1-1...having the function of assigning a transmission right (*right of exploitation of the communication line...*” (emphasis added, col. 5, lines 29-33). Watanabe’s disclosure of controlling access to a system bus can not be read as a teaching of providing priority values to first and second input units that define the scope of authority each input unit (e.g., one accessible in the front seat and the other accessible in the back seat) has over the plurality of sound system generating components, as recited in claim 18. In addition, the element names used in Watanabe themselves indicate the priority assignment disclosed in Watanabe involves access to a transmission medium, rather than the scope of authority assigned over the vehicle sound system control. For example, in Watanabe the element names include “transmission right assigning device”; “transmission right assigning unit” and “transmission request information table”. (emphasis added).

A 35 U.S.C. §102 rejection requires that a single reference teach each and every element of the claimed invention. For any one of the reasons set forth above, Watanabe is incapable of anticipating claim 18.

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 22-24 is moot since claim 18 is patentable.

Claim 25 recites a motor vehicle multimedia sound system that provides audio signals to a speaker. The system includes:

“a plurality of input units that each receive a uniquely associated priority value indicative of a scope of authority each of said input units has been assigned over the motor vehicle sound system; and
a system bus; and
a plurality of audio generating components each capable of communicating with said plurality of input units over said system bus and being selectively controlled by said plurality of input units.” (cl. 25, emphasis added)

As set forth above, Watanabe neither discloses nor suggests any disclosure of first and second input units that control a plurality of sound system generating components. In addition, Watanabe’s disclosure of controlling access to a system bus can not be read as a teaching of providing priority values to a plurality of input units that define the scope of authority each input unit has over the plurality of audio generating unit, as recited in claim 25. For any one of the reasons Watanabe is incapable of anticipating claim 25.

9. The indication that claims 1-3, 7-8 and 10 are allowed is noted and appreciated.

10. The indication that claims 19-21 would be allowable if rewritten to no longer depend from a rejected base claims is noted and appreciated.

It is respectfully submitted that these claims are now in condition for allowance since claim 18 is patentable for at least the reasons set forth above.

For all the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-3, 5, 7-8, 10 and 12-29 is respectfully requested.

If a telephone interview could assist in the prosecution of this application, please call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



Patrick J. O'Shea
Registration No. 35,305
Gauthier & Connors LLP
225 Franklin Street, Suite 3300
Boston, Massachusetts 02110
Telephone: (617) 426-9180 x121